

Commerce Connections Themes

June 29, 2009

11:00 am Community Development Forum

Vancouver

CTED Strengths:

- Washington is a national leader in affordable housing, Weatherization, victim services, and the CTED WorkFirst programs.
- Commerce is where we want our programs because service from your agency has been better. CTED communicates well, even with delivering bad news.
- We aren't always sure how we fit into Commerce, but because of your agency's culture, we want to.
- CTED staff add value to the federal programs. Use LIHEAP and Weatherization as models as ARRA moves forward.
- Your contact with business, energy, local government, and community service is a benefit to our organizations and our customers.

CTED Weaknesses:

- Commerce has a lot going on that we had no idea was there. We found it hard to identify with many of those functions.
- Tax credit program is broken for rural housing projects. We are working with the Housing Finance Commission to fix that.
- We were hopeful that the moderate income housing program would have been done at CTED. Please support WSU so they can be successful.
- State level communication between community organizations and businesses needs improvement. Communicating what we do and how our work brings value to commerce needs to be improved.

Opportunities for Commerce:

- Bring state agencies together on local program requirements
- Improve coordination of funds, visits, and reports
- Ensure that state priorities are coordinated between state city and county plans
- Connect housing with training and transition to employment
- Think of yourselves as the state, not as agencies or divisions
- Be mindful of needs of rural compared to urban
- Improve emergency recovery systems in areas like Lewis County (flooding)
- Help us plan better. Many areas are growing unexpectedly.
- We have an opportunity to invest in affordable housing while construction and housing prices are low.
- Preventing problems will create stronger communities. Prevention has a high return on investment whether it is applied to safety, housing, or other services we provide.
- Use community groups to help business programs improve. It is a good function for Commerce since CTED has a history of strong communication.
- Consider regional teams for community development.

- When considering the new organization, look beyond the definition of the program or its name. Focus more broadly so that the programs function and purpose locally influence where it resides within the state.

Potential Future Threats:

- Housing for veterans is an emerging challenge. Relief funds are not enough alone. Locals are investing other funds. Help us find state support. Veterans Affairs has been hard to work with.
- Businesses don't make the connection between communities and commerce. We support things that attractive communities have like affordable housing, workforce development, safety, and other services.
- Moving programs currently at CTED to DSHS or other agencies may hurt programs that are currently performing well. Agencies that have been suggested as homes are not always good functional fits even though the titles may appear more similar.
- Community programs fit within Commerce because they contribute to strong communities.
- Our programs are not broken; don't move them and risk hurting who we serve.